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New Public Management and the New Professionalism in Education: Compliance, Appropriation and Resistance

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New Public Management and the New Professionalism in Education: Framing the Issue

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Abstract: This article provides an introductory frame for this special issue dedicated to New Public Management and the New Professional Educator. We will introduce the five articles and how they analyze the characteristics of NPM and this emerging new professional as well as forms of educator resistance and advocacy.

Keywords: New Public Management; New Professional Educator; resistance; advocacy

Nueva Gestión Pública y el Nuevo Educador Profesional: Enmarcando el Problema

Resumen: Este artículo ofrece un marco introductorio para este número especial dedicado a la Nueva Gestión Pública y el Nuevo Educador Profesional. Presentaremos los cinco artículos y cómo analizan las características de la NGP y este nuevo modelo de educador profesional, así como las

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formas de resistencia y activismo.

Palabras clave: Nueva Gestión Pública; Nuevo Educador Profesional; resistencia; defensa.

Nova Gestão Pública e New Professional Educator: Enquadrando o Problema

Resumo: Este documento fornece um quadro introdutório para esta edição especial sobre a Nova Gestão Pública e o Novo Educador Profissional. Apresentamos os cinco artigos e como analisam as características do NPM e este novo modelo de educador profissional, e as formas de resistência e ativismo.

Palavras-chave: Gestão Pública; Nova New Educador Profissional; resistência; defesa

New Public Management and the New Professional Educator

The study of education is a parochial field. It tends to be siloed and narrow in its disciplinary focus and country specific in its research focus, even though school reform is now a global phenomenon. Researchers across fields are so specialized they can't possibly understand the proverbial elephant, but only the trunk, a leg, or the tail. And yet, what is happening to teachers today is also happening to principals, counselors, nurses, social workers, doctors and police officers. A "new professionalism" (Evetts, 2009; 2011) is being constructed in all professions and in all countries. While it is enacted differently depending on local contexts, the struggles and dilemmas of the English, Chilean and U.S. teachers, principals, and professors portrayed in these articles are strikingly similar, as are the neoliberal policies these countries have implemented since the 1980s. We are also becoming increasingly aware that the new policy networks of venture philanthropists, think tanks, foundations, international agencies and edubusinesses, who are successfully promoting current reforms, are themselves global (Ball, 2012).

As public schools are increasingly absorbed into a market, profit, and efficiency logic, the professional identities of teachers and leaders are being redesigned around the vision of these policy entrepreneurs, few of whom are educators (Ball, 2001; Gillies, 2011). Urban school districts in the U.S. and around the globe have become sites of experimentation with an array of neoliberal and New Public Management (NPM) reforms that are largely non-evidence-based (Ward, 2011). NPM essentially transfers managerial logics from the private to the public sector (See Anderson & Cohen, this issue, for an overview of NPM).

Moreover, these new policy networks are largely bipartisan, implemented in England by the Tories and New Labour, in the U.S. by both Republicans and New Democrats, and in Chile by the Christian Democrats and the Concertación (an alliance of left parties). Apple (2001) provides a useful overview of what he calls a "hegemonic alliance of the New Right" including *neoliberals*, *social conservatives*, *religious conservatives* and a *new professional middle class*. Apple's notion of *alliances* is useful in that even though these groups may differ in some areas ideologically and politically, they form a sort of informal coalition pushing for markets, standardization, a reversal of separation of church and state, and a perpetuation of inequality based on notions of individualism and meritocracy.

Thanks largely to the influence of these bipartisan policy networks, a long list of reforms has been implemented globally in the last three decades. They include high-stakes testing, school choice, vouchers, charter schools (or their equivalent), principal "autonomy," alternative and fast track pathways to teaching and leading, privatization and contracting out of public services, mayoral control, data-driven management, public-private partnerships, increased school policing and surveillance, schools and districts as profit-centers for "vendors", and digitalization of learning through virtual schools.

In fact, many of these reforms are not being adopted in middle class and affluent communities, but are exclusively targeting low-income communities of color (Scott, 2011). While school choice policies and the privatization of urban public schools is viewed by many reformers as the civil rights issue of our time, some research is finding that public schools actually out-perform private and charter schools when socio-economic level is controlled for (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014; Mizala & Romaguera, 1998).

Globally, these reforms are creating a “new professionalism” across all public sectors that is the result of a transfer of private sector logics into the public sector and the replacement of an ethos of public service with the discipline of the market (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011; Exworthy & Halford, 1999). Evetts (2009) and other sociologists of the professions (Gleeson & Knights 2006; Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne, 2002), are finding similar trends among other public sector professionals.

In education, these changes have had a dramatic impact on what it means to be a teacher and leader, particularly in districts that serve low-income students. New advocacy networks funded by venture philanthropists seek the demise of university-based teacher education and the production of “new professionals” who are trained to work in the highly scripted, franchised charter and virtual schools of the future (Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, 2015).

This collection of articles provides international perspectives on the new professionalism at the school and university levels. Research from Chile, England, and the U.S. provide evidence from three countries that were early adopters of neoliberalism and NPM. The special issue will describe the characteristics of NPM and this emerging new professional and will also review forms of educator resistance and advocacy. The articles provide both conceptual analysis and studies of how new professionalism is manifested within schools as well as in university-based certification programs both through “fast track,” online programs and hybrid programs in which alternative certification (Teach for America, Teaching Fellows) programs partner with university-based programs. The articles use multiple methodologies including interviews, observations, experience sampling methodology (ESM) logs, Q-sort methods, self-ethnography, and discourse and content analysis.

In the first article, *A Framework for Studying Educator Resistance and Advocacy in the Context of New Professionalism*, Gary Anderson & Michael Cohen provide an overview of the literature on new professionalism, New Public Management and forms of resistance, both individual and collective. This article offers a conceptual analysis of the major themes of the resistance literature and proposes a new framework for studying educator resistance and advocacy. Rather than a return to “old” professionalism, they provide characteristics of a new community-based, advocacy professional.

Kathryn Herr, in her article, *Cultivating Disruptive Subjectivities: Interrupting the New Professionalism* provides a self-ethnography of her lived experience of “everyday neoliberalism” and the ways it creates new subjectivities in the workplace. This article explores the tensions and contradictions between graduate students’ experiences in an action research class and the larger goals of an educational leadership certification program designed to prepare teachers who can seamlessly enter schools reflective of the audit culture of New Public Management.

In *Targets, Threats and (dis)Trust: The Managerial Troika for Public School Principals in Chile*, Carmen Montecinos, Luis Ahumada, Sergio Galdames, Fabian Campos, and Veronica Leiva study how principals experience everyday neoliberalism as their professional role changes from instructional leader to school marketer. They explore how a structural problem (public schools’ declining enrollment in Chile) created by neoliberal policies is transformed into an individual problem to be managed by the public school principal. They document the ways that school principals have been

charged with meeting targets for increasing enrollment and how much of their daily time is spent devising marketing schemes.

In *Conceptualizing teacher professional identity in neoliberal times: Resistance, compliance and reform*, David Hall and Ruth McGinity report findings from extensive ethnographic school data on everyday neoliberalism and how teachers comply or resist current reforms in English schools. They argue that theorizing and researching resistance at a time of widespread compliance has become an urgent issue for educational researchers, which includes a localized understanding of how compliance has been secured.

Finally, in *Hybridized teacher education programs: A missed opportunity from the forced partnership between university-based and alternative teacher preparation?*, Angus Shiva Mungal reports the findings of an interview study of six university-based teacher preparation programs that integrated alternative pathways to teaching (Teach for America, Teaching Fellows, etc.). The objective of the study was to explore how education schools adapted as alternative teacher preparation programs entered their institutional environment. This forced merger of more traditional notions of professionalism and new professionalism highlighted distinctions between conflicting notions of professionalism and revealed the potential for a hybrid teacher.

We hope that this special issue will stimulate more research on how NPM and market-based policies filter into the everyday lives of professionals. It is important to “study up” to look at the new policy networks that are promoting these policies, but it is equally important to better understand how they are refashioning a new professional and how this is lived (and resisted) on the ground.

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